

SACOG Answers to MPO Follow-up Questions

Revised: 6/1/10

1. If you were to fully account for the impact of the recession in your region, how would the % reductions in GHG/capita numbers change for each scenario in 2020?
 - a. In what ways has the economy affected your region (e.g. population, jobs, unemployment, new development, foreclosures, vacancy rates, etc.)?
 - i. The most glaring effect of the recession is on unemployment (see attached graph):
 1. from 2002-2006, regional unemployment rate hovered between 5 and 6 percent, with the highest-rate counties (Yuba and Sutter) ranging from 8 to 12 percent.
 2. from 2007-2009, regional unemployment climbed to nearly 12 percent, with the highest-rate counties (Yuba and Sutter) up to nearly 20 percent.
 - ii. Population growth has slowed, but the effect is not as dramatic as that observed on unemployment (see attached graph):
 1. Year-over-year population growth rate peaked in 2002 (+3.1%), and has declined steadily since then.
 2. Since 2006, year-over-year population growth rate has been below +2%, which is the historic average annual population growth rate since 1990.
 - iii. There were other significant changes, which are indirectly related to the recession (see attached graphs): due to the recession related jockeying of funding for public transit, most operators raised transit fares, and began service cutbacks, which show up as declines in service hours per capita; also, VMT and congestion both declined, due primarily to less work-related travel.
 - b. If you have already included the impact of the recession, where is it reflected in your scenario data?
 - i. We have included or will include the “recession effect” in two significant ways:
 1. For our MTP planned for adoption in 2011, SACOG will update its base year from 2005 (pre-recession) to 2008. Some recession effects were in evidence in 2008, and these will be captured in our base year update.
 2. We have updated our long-range regional economic projections since the recession, and those projections are for lower growth than our last projection series. By 2035, the new projects are lower in population by 194,000, and lower in jobs by 165,000. Some of this reduction is related to the current recession.

2. What factors cause the reductions in 2020 to be different from 2035, and where do they show up in your data? This pattern did not show up in our forecasts.
3. What model improvements, changes in planning assumptions, or additional policies are you considering that were not used in developing your scenarios?
 - a. As mentioned above, SACOG is updating its base year land use and demographic data to 2008, from 2005, and will be developing growth allocations using the newer, lower-growth long range economic projections. In the short term, some enhancements will be made to SACOG's representation of transit service and highway networks. In the longer term, SACOG will be adding tolling/pricing policy analysis capabilities to its regional travel demand model, funded through the first round of Strategic Growth Council planning grants. In terms of planning assumptions and policies, in the more refined scenarios SACOG develops and analyzes for the 2011 MTP, there will be more attention paid to specific roadway improvement alternatives than were evaluated in the GHG target scenarios. Also, the 2011 MTP alternatives will look at a range of budget assumptions, which were not evaluated in the GHG target scenarios.
 - b. How will they impact the direction and/or magnitude of change? Unknown at this time.
4. Have the sensitivities of your model changed since the 2009 Model Evaluation Survey conducted for RTAC? If yes, please explain why. (i.e., are you using any new models or postprocessors to develop your scenarios that were not evaluated during the RTAC Survey?) No. SACOG developed a couple of post-processing adjustments to reflect higher deployment levels of TSM/TDM and pricing policies—these post-processing adjustments may be carried into the 2011 MTP scenarios analysis.
5. Did you add, remove, or change the level of deployment of any transportation projects or programs in your scenarios? If so, what type of projects or programs? The changes in transportation projects from our 2008 MTP are summarized in the descriptions of each of the scenarios. Changes were made to transit service levels, TSM/TDM levels, parking costs, and transit fares. New transportation programs added in the scenarios include a VMT charge and a congested VMT charge,
6. Please provide calculations of Vehicle Miles Traveled per capita as well as Greenhouse Gas Emissions per capita in reporting results of the evaluation of your adopted RTP and alternative scenarios.

- a. These were provided in SACOG's "Appendix 3" writeup, and are attached here as well.